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Thurmond tells KGB methods

Spy used clout, got Senate

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WASHINGTON—A Soviet bloc spy obtained a Senate staff job through which the agent passed information using a code book. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R., S.C.) has disclosed.

FBI discovery of the staff infiltration was one of several breakthroughs tracing widespread Communist efforts to place agents in key positions on House and Senate staffs, several sources told The Tribune.

Thurmond, ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, emerged from a classified briefing by the FBI and made these disclosures:

- David Barnett, a former Central Intelligence Agency agent who was indicted Friday for acting as an espionage agent for the Soviet KGB, tried to use political clout to obtain staff jobs not only on the House and Senate intelligence committees but also on the White House's Foreign Intelligence Oversight Board, a three-member advisory panel.

- A defecting member of a Soviet bloc intelligence service told the CIA that "Congress was considered a primary target of his service and that the official had easy access to several congressional staff members both on committees and on personal staffs."

A source close to the investigation said the defector came from the Romanian embassy.

- The FBI has unearthed other facts about Soviet infiltration that are "of the gravest concern touching on matters of far greater significance than is publicly recognized at this time."

NUMEROUS INTERVIEWS with investigators and others close to the situation disclosed that the Soviets used some old-fashioned American political clout in at least one daring scheme to infiltrate the staff responsible for evaluating covert CIA operations for senators on the Intelligence Committee.

Thurmond refused to identify the agent or the staff job successfully infiltrated in the Senate, but one of his aides noted that the Barnett case may have been typical.

Barnett worked for the CIA in Indonesia in the late 1960 and early 1970s and specialized in recruiting Soviet personnel to spy for the United States.

Friday, he was indicted on charges he violated the Espionage Act by passing secrets to the Soviets regarding a CIA project code-named HABRINK, which intelligence sources described as a program to collect Russian spy manuals, weapons, and other secret hardware.

Barnett's defection endangered lives, it was alleged.

BARNETT. THE Tribune learned, obtained a job interview with three top staff members of the Senate Intelligence Committee by having his wife, Sarah, ask for help from a congressman whom she had befriended while attending college in Ohio 20 years ago.

Barnett's wife persuaded Rep. Andrew Maguire (D., N.J.) to use his congressional clout to obtain the interview after Barnett had been told the committee's staff had no openings.

Maguire said in a prepared statement that he knew Barnett was a former CIA agent, but had no knowledge that he was a KGB double agent—called a "mole" in spy jargon—until last April when he was interviewed by the FBI about his role in the case.

A spokesman for the Senate Intelligence Committee said that Barnett was given an interview because of Maguire's recommendation.

Barnett was interviewed by William Miller, the committee's staff director; Benjamin Marshall, the committee security director; and Audrey Hatry, chief clerk of the panel.

After the interview, Miller sent a copy of Barnett's resume to the House Intelligence Committee with a memo attached: "This fellow came in on recommendation of Rep. Maguire for an interview. I suggested he call you for an interview."

THURMOND SAID Friday of Barnett, "I am informed he was also recommended by a senior congressional staff member" for jobs both at the House and the White House.

Thurmond and other Republican senators, including Sen. Malcolm Wallop (Wyo.), said they were upset that the Barnett case was not disclosed long ago.

But an Intelligence Committee source said the fact that Barnett was a KGB agent was told to the Senate just weeks after he applied for work in 1977.

staff job

The CIA had learned, this source said, that Barnett had been recruited by the Soviet spy agency in the early 1970s after quitting the CIA embassy station in Indonesia in the consulate at Surabaya.

Barnett started a business importing rattan furniture into the United States, and apparently was recruited by the KGB after he ran into financial troubles.

HE REPORTEDLY was paid up to \$100,000 to provide the HABRINK data to the Soviets and would have received more if he had won a congressional or White House post.

One FBI official said that Barnett was not indicted until nearly three years after his spy activities were unearthed because the CIA debated for a long time using him as a "triple agent" to feed false information to the Soviets.

Thurmond charged after his FBI briefing, "I can say the briefing tended to confirm my original assessment that the prosecution of the David Barnett case was delayed inordinately for reasons which may have involved political factors and consideration.

"While I would not characterize the David Barnett case as merely the tip of the iceberg as has been suggested by others, I would state that far more is still to be learned concerning the penetration of the institutions of the American government by Soviet intelligence and the intelligence services of other unfriendly nations.

"In that connection, we have learned recently from the defection of a foreign intelligence officer that Congress was considered the primary target of his service," Thurmond said.